

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, at 8:21 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Councilmembers present: Councilman Ken Dishman, Councilman Graham McDonald, Councilman Gabriel Sterling, Councilman Tibby DeJulio, and Councilman Andy Bauman.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Development

1. **15-076** Tree Conservation Ordinance Amendments

Director of Community Development Angela Parker gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Tree Conservation Ordinance Amendments.

Councilman Andy Bauman asked if the City is trying to protect the critical root zone (CRZ) of trees.

Director of Community Development Parker responded yes.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked if canopy points apply to the type of tree or width of a tree.

Director of Community Development Parker stated there are three sizes of trees; large trees, medium trees, and small trees. A large tree is worth 1,000 canopy credits, a medium tree 750 credits, and a small tree 250 credits.

Councilman Bauman asked if someone has an existing tree and it is providing all of the benefits that a frontage tree provides with filtration and shade, would the preservation of that tree entitle the property owner to extra credit.

Director of Community Development Parker stated the City is trying to preserve trees. The ordinance may need information added stating that greater value be given for trees being left along the frontage. Any trees planted along the frontage of a property will be given 1,500 canopy points. She suggested this item be on the Council meeting agenda for April 7th.

Councilman Bauman thanked Director of Community Development Parker and staff for their work on this ordinance. This is a passionate issue for some in the community. The benefits are environmental air quality and heat island effect, as well as addressing immediate issues of adjacent property owners. He wished there was a way to simplify the ordinance. During the meeting he received an email from a constituent that lives on over two acres of property. He asked if the City would advise him to employ an attorney to tell him what he should do when a tree needs to be removed from his property. It should be recognized the ordinance is about rational rules. There is a lot of pending redevelopment in the City and there are acres of trees that will be impacted, which will affect the tree canopy over the next few years. He asked if the current ordinance and proposed ordinances prevent clear cutting.

Director of Community Development Parker stated given the setbacks and buildable area on a lot of smaller lots, it is virtually impossible to save trees. The reason is because one would be in the CRZ of trees on that property. An example is the R-3 zoning setback is ten feet on the sides and that does not give extra space.

Councilman Bauman stated there is no specific tree type under the City's ordinance that is protected. The canopy coverage is the end result and not what is being done in the process. He likes the incentive system and he believes not all canopy is equal. Some property owners load their canopy on the rear of the

property and that meets the numbers. He agrees with the City incentivizing the right trees in the right locations whether it is on the street frontage or setback areas that provide benefits and balance to adjacent property owners. It does not seem the City can prevent clear cutting. He asked what the impact would be if the minimum canopy for residential lots of a certain size increased. He asked about lots that are 1/3 or 1/2 an acre or larger and changing the tree canopy number from 30% to 35%. He asked what the impact would be if the canopy is increased from 30% to possibly 40%.

Director of Community Development Parker stated as the lot gets smaller, the impact is less. For 30%, a 20,000 square foot lot would have to plant six trees, if everything was cleared, and for 40% the number of trees would be eight. If everything was cleared on a one acre lot the owner would be required to plant thirteen trees at 30% canopy and seventeen trees at 40% canopy.

Councilman Bauman asked what the fines were for not complying with the tree ordinance in the most egregious situations.

Director of Community Development Parker stated the fine is \$1,000 per infraction. For tree cutting the fine would be levied when the violation occurred. For every tree damaged the violator will receive a citation. There have been fines of over \$20,000 and some were \$9,000. The court seems to be very strict when it comes to tree infractions.

Councilman Sterling stated he appreciates the direction on the incentives. He would like a better understanding of moving from 30% tree canopy to 35%. The City needs to have a single piece of paper that can be given to a citizen that explains the tree ordinance.

Director of Community Development Parker stated the City currently has that.

Councilman Sterling asked what percentage of tree canopy commercial property owners are required to replant.

Director of Community Development Parker stated 40%.

Councilman Sterling stated residential is 30% and commercial is 40%.

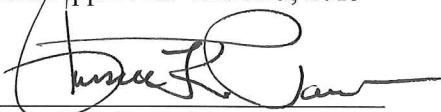
Director of Community Development Parker stated apartments and townhomes are considered commercial properties.

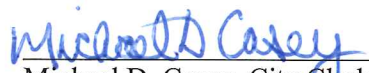
Councilman Bauman stated he has an issue with the required tree canopy being at 30% and he would like it looked at to determine if it can be increased to 35%.

There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to the April 7th Regular City Council meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Date Approved: March 3, 2015


Russell K. Paul, Mayor


Michael D. Casey, City Clerk